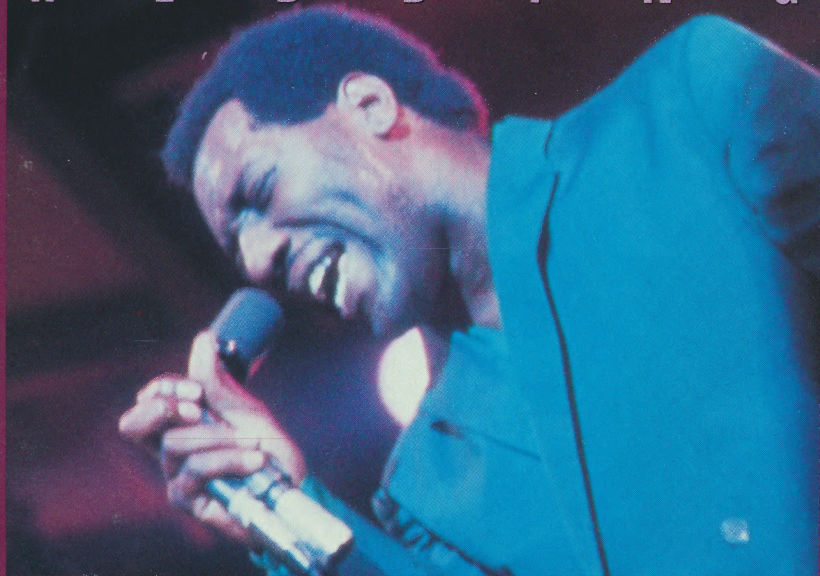
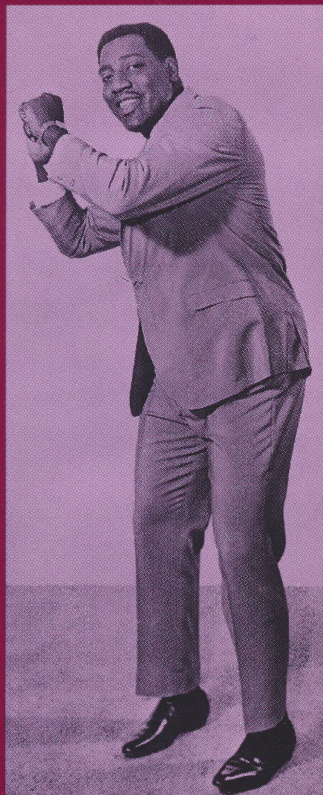


T H E V E R Y B E S T O F

OTIS

R E D D I N G



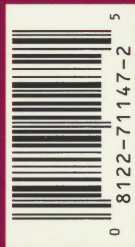


1. **THESE ARMS OF MINE**
2. **PAIN IN MY HEART**
- * 3. **THAT'S HOW STRONG MY LOVE IS**
4. **MR. PITIFUL**
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14. **TRAMP - with Carla Thomas**
15. **(SITTIN' ON) THE DOCK OF THE BAY**
- * 16. **I'VE GOT DREAMS TO REMEMBER**

*CD BONUS TRACKS

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When Otis Redding's twin-engine plane crashed into Lake Monoma near Madison, Wisconsin, on December 10, 1967, white America knew next to nothing about him. But scarcely three months after his death, Otis' most atypical recording, "(Sittin' On) The Dock Of The Bay," landed at #1 on the pop charts. Soon after, a generation of rock fans embraced his unforgettable performance at the Monterey International Pop Festival, as captured on film by documentarian D.A. Pennebaker.

The intervening 25 years have served only to magnify Redding's stature as one of the true titans of soul music. That such a rich legacy could be left by a man who lived only 26 years is remarkable enough. Yet Redding did more than make himself a star. He expanded the lexicon of soul, enlarging the focus on black artists beyond the machine-tooled magic of Motown. His work (like that of contemporaries James Brown and Wilson Pickett) celebrated his rural origins and gave audiences a taste of the musical influences swirling around him as well as the

forces that raged within.

By the time of his death, Redding had also become a consummate showman. Whether onstage or in the studio, he extracted the meaning at the core of every lyric, often ignoring the cumbersome vagaries of words. And, while Otis' shouts could rattle the sheet rock off anyone's wall, he also understood the power an unexpected pause could have in creating dramatic tension.

Tight arrangements and bittersweet melodies aside, the principal quality embedded in all Redding's records was the unadorned humanity of his voice. It simultaneously conveyed both urgency and vulnerability—a disarming strain of masculine sincerity in short supply before the sexual revolution. It was as if every Redding track contained a hologram of Otis himself, the world-weary troubadour always longing for a brighter day. His heart was so much on his sleeve that when you bought a Redding record, you took a little piece of Otis home with you, too.

Otis Redding Jr. was born September 9, 1941, the son of a part-time Baptist preacher in Dawson, Georgia. When Otis was three, the family moved to Macon, where he

sang regularly in church choirs along with other members of his family. By the time Redding reached 10th grade, Otis Sr. had become increasingly ill with tuberculosis. To help his mother Fanny support his four sisters and brother (and to satisfy his own musical ambitions), Otis set out on the road with Little Richard's former backup band, The Upsetters. Even though his earnings were meager, he managed to send money back home almost every week.

Otis began his career singing with a quick succession of groups, followed by an impressive winning streak on Macon's live local talent show, "Teenage Party." There he met his future wife, Zelma, his future manager, Phil Walden, and the man who would inadvertently start Redding's ascension to stardom, a flashy guitarist with a flair for stage theatrics named Johnny Jenkins. By 1962, Otis was a sometime singer with Jenkin's group, The Pinetoppers. Some recall Redding was not only the featured vocalist; frequently, he was the valet. Others suggest he doubled as the band's chauffeur. "Otis was the shoeshine boy of the band," keyboardist Booker T. Jones (of The MG's) would reminisce in a video tribute years later. "They let him



sing sometimes."

Steve Cropper, The MG's guitarist who would collaborate with Redding on many of his best-known songs, recalls that Otis "drove the car, set up the bandstand, stuff like that. And then they'd let him come

up and sing, because Johnny Jenkins was basically a solo artist, so he didn't need a singer on every song."

In October of 1962, while Kennedy and Khrushchev were seesawing between cold war and nuclear annihilation, Johnny Jenkins and The Pinetoppers drove to the Stax studio in Memphis to cut a record. After two and a half hours of futile attempts, the session was written off as a disaster. With half an hour of studio time left, Otis was given a chance to sing.

"I think he really had been on [MG's drummer] Al Jackson all day long," Cropper remembers. "Al said,

'This guy keeps bugging me; we've got to give him a chance.' Every time we'd take a little break, he'd grab Al and say, 'I want to sing for you guys. I want you all to hear me.'"

While no two witnesses seem to agree on the fine points of the

session (some maintain that Otis had been scheduled to record all along, while others contend it was a mere fluke), Otis needed only one opportunity to prove himself. Although "Hey Hey Baby" was a Little Richard-inspired trifle that impressed no one in attendance, the second tune, **"These Arms Of Mine,"** bore the unmistakable mark of a unique talent in gestation.

It took nearly a year for "These Arms Of Mine" to become a hit (finally landing at #20 on the R&B charts), and much credit goes to disc jockey John Richbourg, then known on the air as John R at Nashville's WLAC. Of course, Richbourg's incessant playing of the 45 was not entirely altruistic. He had been given



a share of the song's publishing rights from the outset.

None of that mattered to Otis Redding. Whether he owed his break to accident or design, whether the first hit was a smash out of the box or had to be driven into listeners' consciousness with a hammer was beside the point. Redding's work was his life. His records continued to

make inroads on the R&B charts, and because the tunes reflected so much of Otis' personality, his fans became better acquainted and more devoted with each release.

"If you look at the lyrics of the songs," Cropper explained, "I really wrote about him. Otis never did write about himself. It was just easy to look at him and come up with



Photo: Courtesy Atlantic Records

lines about him. But Otis always had 10 or 15 musical ideas, unfinished things.

"I remember I started a song in the shower one morning, went down and picked him up and we wrote it on the way to the studio. We showed it to the band and cut that song instead of the one we'd worked up. It was called '**Mr. Pitiful**' (#41 pop; #10 R&B, 1964)."

Such Redding hits as "**I Can't Turn You Loose**" (#11 R&B, 1965) and "**Fa-Fa-Fa-Fa (Sad Song)**" (#29 pop; #12 R&B, 1966) made him a staple of Stax Records, then a sort of paternal presence. At a time when Stax's fortunes were increasing almost exponentially, Otis had the ability to keep everyone down-

to-earth, because he kept his own ego so well in check. A torrent of hits by Sam & Dave, Booker T. & The MG's, and Rufus & Carla Thomas followed, but Otis remained the point man. As writer Peter Guralnick put it, Redding "was the heart and soul of Stax." Through it all, say friends and associates alike, Otis never forgot his humble beginnings.

In "**Tramp**," (#26 pop; #2 R&B, 1967) he and partner Carla Thomas actually discuss his roots. Carla runs Otis down for his lack of bankroll, need of a haircut, and preference for overalls. Through her own thick Southern dialect, Carla chides him mercilessly for three minutes.

Carla: "You know what, Otis?"

Otis: "What?"

Carla: "You're country."

Otis: "S'alright."

Carla: "You're straight from the Georgia woods."

Otis: "That's good."

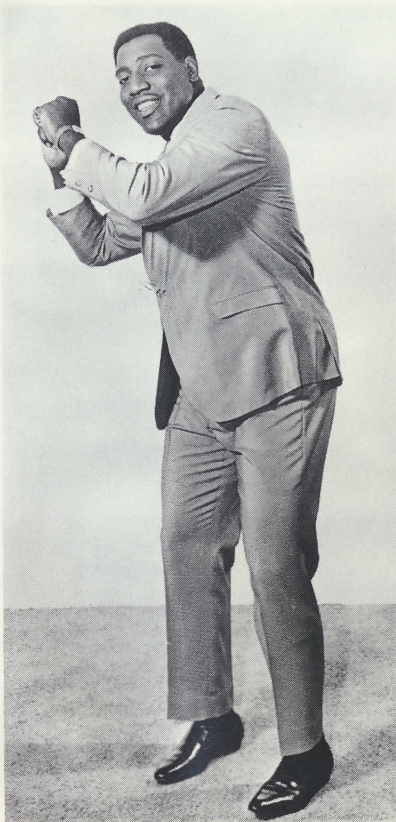
Otis remains unbowed—even jubilant—throughout: he never lets his self-esteem become contingent upon someone else's approval.

Even with his own career on a fast track, Redding took time to nurture other aspiring artists. His

best-known protégé, Arthur Conley, was of particular musical merit to Otis, partially because Conley could sound eerily like Sam Cooke, one of Otis' favorite singers. In fact, Otis produced Conley's only major hit, "Sweet Soul Music" (#2 pop and R&B), from the borrowed melody of an old Cooke album track called "Yeah Man," rewriting the lyrics in tribute to other soul singers he admired.

In the spring of 1967, the record company staged its only tour with the troupe that had made Stax and its sister label, Volt, household names. Otis, the headliner, worked his ass off in order to provide a climax to a show that included Booker T. & The MG's, Conley, Eddie Floyd (still hot from his "Knock On Wood" success), and the showstopping chemistry of Sam & Dave. When they returned, Otis still had one more concert obligation—a nonpaying gig at the Monterey International Pop Festival.

Redding, backed by Booker T. & the MG's and The Mar-Keys, followed The Jefferson Airplane at one in the morning — in matching lime-green suits, no less. The moment was ripe for a flop of monumental proportions, and in less than five minutes, Otis had "the love crowd"



in attendance eating out of the palm of his hand.

"It was the end of the (Stax-Volt) tour, the last date of the tour," Booker T. remembers. Cropper says wistfully, "That was the last time we ever played together."

There, Redding pulled out all the stops, paying tribute to Cooke in "**Shake**" (#47 pop; #16 R&B, 1967) and galvanizing the audience with his completely retooled cover of The Rolling Stones' "**Satisfaction**" (Otis' version reached #31 pop; #4 R&B, 1966). He stripped the lyric of all except the necessary components, souped up the melody with The Mar-Keys' charging horn charts, and turned it into a high-performance muscle machine.

Another number from the set list spawned a career for the Queen of Soul. At Monterey, Redding described "**Respect**" as "a song that a girl took away from me. A good friend of mine, this girl, she just took this song. But I'm still gonna do it anyway." (Incidentally, Redding's original version of the song stalled out at #35 pop, but made it to #4 on the R&B charts in 1965.)

Otis could do no wrong that night; his rendition of "**I've Been Loving You Too Long (To Stop**

Now)" outstrips its studio counterpart for raw impact, and when he finally broke into "**Try A Little Tenderness**," the bundled-up energy of the '60s seemed to pour out through Otis and the band.

After that watershed event, Redding took a well-earned sabbatical in Sausalito, California, where he sat for hours on a houseboat, strumming his guitar and endlessly replaying *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. He began composing a tune, paying special attention to its lyrics. When he brought the finished song back home, no one seemed to care for it. Except Otis.

Zelma, Otis' widow, told writer Peter Guralnick, "I really couldn't get into it. I said, 'Oh, God, you're changing.' And he said, 'Yeah, I think it's time for me to change in my music. People might be tired of me.'"

The song, "**(Sittin' On) The Dock Of The Bay**" was recorded December 6 and 7, 1967. Otis Redding died

three days after the session took place, and almost three decades later, the world is *still* not tired of him.

—Kevin Phinney



1. **THESE ARMS OF MINE**
(Redding)
(Volt single #103, 12/62; R&B #20, Pop #85)
2. **PAIN IN MY HEART**
(Neville)
(Volt single #112, 10/63; R&B #61, Pop #61)
3. **THAT'S HOW STRONG MY LOVE IS**
(Jamison)
(Volt single #124, 12/64; R&B #18, Pop #74)
4. **MR. PITIFUL**
(Cropper/Redding)
(Volt single #124, 12/64; R&B #10, Pop #41)
5. **I'VE BEEN LOVING YOU TOO LONG (TO STOP NOW)**
(Redding/Butler)
(Volt single #126, 4/65; R&B #2, Pop #21)
6. **RESPECT**
(Redding)
(Volt single #128, 8/65; R&B #4, Pop #35)
7. **I CAN'T TURN YOU LOOSE**
(Redding/Cropper/Robinson)
(Volt single #130, 12/65; R&B #11)
8. **SATISFACTION**
(Jagger/Richards)
(Volt single #132, 2/66; R&B #4, Pop #31)
9. **MY LOVER'S PRAYER**
(Redding)
(Volt single #136, 5/66; R&B #10, Pop #61)
10. **FA-FA-FA-FA-FA (SAD SONG)**
(Redding/Cropper)
(Volt single #138, 9/66; R&B #12, Pop #29)
11. **TRY A LITTLE TENDERNESS**
(Connelly/Woods/Campbell)
(Volt single #141, 11/66; R&B #4, Pop #25)
12. **SHAKE**
(Cooke)
(Volt single #149, 5/67; R&B #16, Pop #47)
13. **THE HAPPY SONG (DUM-DUM)**
(Redding/Cropper)
(Volt single #163, 4/68; R&B #10, Pop #25)
14. **TRAMP - with Carla Thomas**
(Fulson/McCracklin)
(Stax single #216, 4/67; R&B #2, Pop #26)
15. **(SITTIN' ON) THE DOCK OF THE BAY**
(Redding/Cropper)
(Volt single #157, 1/68; R&B #1, Pop #1)
16. **I'VE GOT DREAMS TO REMEMBER**
(Redding/Redding)
(Atco single #6612, 9/68; R&B #6, Pop #41)

Note: Numbers in italic (following original release information) denote peak positions on *Billboard's* R&B Singles and "Hot 100" charts respectively - courtesy *Billboard Publications, Inc.* and Joel Whitburn's *Record Research Publications*.

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MY LOVE IS 4 MR. PITIFUL
5 I'VE BEEN LOVING YOU
TOO LONG (TO STOP
NOW) 6 RESPECT
7 I CAN'T TURN YOU
LOOSE 8 SATISFACTION
9 MY LOVER'S PRAYER
10 FA-FA-FA-FA-FA (SAD SONG)
11 TRY A LITTLE TENDERNESS 12 SHAKE
13 THE HAPPY SONG (DUM-DUM)
14 TRAMP 15 (SITTIN' ON) THE DOCK
OF THE BAY 16 I'VE GOT DREAMS TO
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